

## Preface

Let's start with a little background. We've already began our walk with Jesus while He was on the earth. We've learned who He is to us and why He came. Over the next several chapters we're going to follow Jesus' teachings on Christian living and the promises He came to share with us for our future and more about who God is. In studying the gospels, I hope we find a harmony between them and a connection to God our Father and Jesus His Son. I also hope we can begin to really see who Jesus is, His love for us, His hope of salvation with us, and that we can learn how to follow in His footsteps.

So, we begin with Jesus' sermon on a hillside where He begins teaching those who will listen some important truths. Three chapters long this sermon represents what Jesus has come to teach us all while on earth- life in the Kingdom of God. It teaches us characteristics of those who choose to belong to God not only how we should live on earth but how we'll be in Heaven. We will be starting with the chapters found in Matthew 5 through 7 but we will be walking through the entire gospels pulling in Jesus' time on earth, the parables He taught, and the miracles He performed and how they each fit into the chapters on the Sermon on the Mount.

This time I have not added all the Bible verses at the end of each chapter, so I encourage you to have your Bible open next to you while you read and look up the verses and see what has been said. Study the verses and let the Lord speak to you through them as He spoke to me and allow them to dwell in your hearts as you learn what Jesus is teaching each of us through His time on this earth. All scripture is taken from the New Century Version unless marked.

## Chapter 1

### Digging Deeper: Matthew 5:1-12

When many read the word blessed, they think happy. But there is a deeper meaning when we look closer. Blessedness is a deep, abiding joy that comes when we live in harmony with God. In Greek the word “blessed” is *makarios*, and it means “fortunate, to be envied, one upon whom God has extended His favor and His benefits.” What a beautiful thought, to be brought in favor with God. The beatitudes bring us closer to Christ as we recognize the need of Him in our lives and helps us grow as God's children in His Kingdom.

#### **Matthew 5:3- Blessed in the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

The word poor tends to point to those who have very little physically and are dependent on others for their well-being. Many put poor and poverty together, so they look at this verse as those people. But studying more closely Jesus says the poor in spirit. Our spirit is what is inside of us. It's not just a poverty thing but a heart matter.

When Jesus is saying the poor in spirit, He is referring to those who recognize the need of God for their well-being. They are humbled knowing what this world offers will not contribute to their life in Heaven. They recognize the sin and corruption in their hearts and cannot please God on their own. They know they need help from Jesus.

The poor in spirit are not arrogant, not self-righteous and know they cannot be sufficient on their own. They have rid themselves of selfishness, pride and self-reliance and live in humility and complete dependence on God, His mercy, and His grace.

Their blessing is the Kingdom of Heaven. Not the physically poor or province-stricken people, but those who are “spiritually poor” and have humbled themselves and become dependent on God. This message is a call of repentance, acknowledging that they bring

## Chapter 3- Our Daily Bread

Prayer is our “divine appointment”- the appointment above all others. When we miss it, we are putting ourselves on enemy ground.

What are your experiences with prayer?

- Childhood?
- Present?
- Positive or negative

Have you ever prayed aloud? In your heart? In writing?

Have you ever felt a sense of a prayer being answered or not answered? Explain.

Is prayer part of your life?

### **Moments of Prayer**

Prayer, such a simple 6 letter word yet packed with so much depth and meaning.

There is so much that could be said about prayer in the Bible that there has been many books, blogs, stories, short stories, and more written about it. Prayer is important to Jesus, and it is essential in our lives and walk with Him. In this chapter we will try to cover a lot of things about prayer without making it, its own book. I encourage my readers to take some time for yourself during your personal studies, open the scriptures and see what more you can learn on prayer.

Prayer is important to Jesus that He adds it to His sermon while on the mount. Before we get into that prayer let's talk about a couple reasons prayer is important.

## Chapter 6- Growing in God's Character- A Golden Life

Over the next few chapters, we are going to unlock more of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As we do, we will bring in parables and times Jesus lived or used the principles through the gospels. Matthew 5-7 opens with the Sermon on the Mount as a gateway to how Jesus walked and talked over the next few years of His ministry. These chapters are instructions from Jesus as how all people, not just Christians, should live. As a Christian we should especially be aware of our actions and words as we are representing Christ who lives in us. As we learn from Jesus and put to practice these practical principles our character is growing to be more like Jesus in preparing our hearts to live in His righteous Kingdom. We will be jumping through several verses, many that are the same in all the gospels and hopefully learn some new things or refresh ourselves on things we know.

In this chapter we will be studying closer the Golden Rule, the Greatest Commandment, helping others, and judging which all can be shown through our actions. Let's begin with a simple parable found in Matthew 7:16-19, Matthew 12:33-35, and Luke 6:43-45.

### **Our Words and Actions**

We all understand how fruit grows on trees and plants produce vegetables and so did those who heard Jesus speak. Jesus begins by saying, "Grapes don't come from thornbushes and figs don't come from thorny weeds. Good fruit comes from good trees and bad trees produce bad fruit. A good tree cannot make bad fruit and a bad tree cannot make good fruit." The gospel of Luke adds that, "Each tree is known by its own fruit." If you want a banana you don't go to an orange tree and if you want grapes you don't pick at a strawberry patch.

Jesus is explaining that in our lives, every word and every action is a fruit from our hearts. Sinners sin because that's what's in their hearts. Thieves steal, liars lie, cheaters cheat, bullies bully, because their hearts are producing the sinful fruit from an evil heart. "Bad hearts produce bad fruit, and you will know them by their fruits," Jesus spoke clearly.

## **It's Golden for a Reason**

Whether a Christian or not we all can quote this verse even if we don't realize it's in the Bible. We use it to teach children as a way of life and as an adult we use it as a guide for our actions. Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31, "Do to others what you want them to do to you."

First, notice it doesn't say do to others what they do to you (that's revenge). It says treat them how you want to be treated. In other words, even if they treat you poorly, you love (respect) them because you want to be loved. We treat them good because all men are worthy of love in God's eyes. All were created in God's image- Genesis 1:27, Jesus willingly died on the cross for each person- John 3:16. Everyone is worth the same before God and we all have an opportunity to receive salvation if we choose.

The "golden rule" is not just in terms of love it's showing respect to others because we want to be respected. You don't have to agree with their choices or lifestyle, but you can show respect to them as a child of God. We can show respect by putting others first- Philippians 2:3-4, put their well-being into perspective. We just learned about the willingness to forgive- Matthew 6:14, don't keep score, always forgive. Strive to love and peace- Romans 12:17-18, this is shown in patience and tolerance for each other- Ephesians 4:2.

## Chapter 7- All that Glitters is Not Gold

What is the difference between what we store up on earth and what we store up in Heaven?

In the stories of Sherlock Holmes there's a story about how Sherlock was able to sneak into the home of Irene Adler and steal an incriminating picture of her and the king that posed a risk of scandal. how was he able to do this? Well, he told Watson to throw a smoke bomb through a window prompting the warning call of "fire". Irene exposes the hidden place of the picture since she runs to the exact room where the picture is hidden. When Watson asked Sherlock how he knew that would work, Sherlock replies, "When a woman thinks that her house is on fire, her instinct is to rush to the thing she values most."

Be honest, if your house was on fire or you knew a tornado was going to hit it, what would you grab before running to safety?

### **Digging Deeper- Matthew 6:19-24, Luke 12:32-34**

Treasure defined is: something valuable that is kept or hidden in a safe place. Something very special or important period something or someone greatly valued or loved.

Although the stories of Sherlock Holmes were made up, the writer had the right idea. People will inevitably reveal what they value most by their actions. Some people may value money more than anything and go to great lengths to secure it and gain more. For some it's the bigger, the better idea they value and put money into having it. For some, their success is most valued, and they put all their time and energy into achieving it. Then there are those whose treasure is family which is revealed on the time they spend with them or the length they go to protect them.

## Chapter 8- God's Got This and God's Got You!

What do you worry about most these days?

When have you experienced the greatest worry in your life? How did you deal with it?

### **Matthew 6:25-34, Luke 12:22-31**

We worry about what others think of us. We worry about our relationships. We worry about our kids. We worry about our job and all the bills that seem to pile up. Worry, worry, worry, no matter who you are, everyone deals with worry in their lives. How can we go through life and all it throws at us and heed Jesus' command not to worry?

Have you ever been told, 'Don't bring trouble before it's here?' When we begin to worry aren't we usually doing that? We begin to see all the negative outcomes and those outcomes can begin to set into reality before it's even happened. Here are a couple more phrases you might be familiar with. 'Don't look for the other shoe to drop', 'Don't go looking for trouble.'

When you live under a cloud of worry your mind begins to dwell in the wrong places. All around you daily God drops tokens of love to surround you. From the beautiful sunrise to your very breath. The love of family or even your pets. You have food, you have life, the sun comes up each day, nature around you. Each are a blessing from God for you, but when you sit in worry you miss the blessings. When you worry of what may come or know for sure difficulty and your life will happen it can begin to drive a wedge between you and God because of the unrest in your soul. Worry can lead you away from God, your source of help and strength.

"The Lord is not pleased to have us fret and worry ourselves out of the arms of Jesus. He is the only source of every grace, the fulfillment of every promise, the realization of every blessing. Let us